

TREMENDOUS TESTIMONIES.

["The Omniscients' Omnium-gatherum" seen through the eyes of its Readers.]

THE proof of the pudding is in the eating, or, as the Roman poet SOPHOCLES used to say, *Experto crede*. The real test of the utility of the *Omniscients' Omnium-gatherum* is that applied by its purchasers, who range from Field-Marshal to sandwichmen. The opinions which follow, selected at random from billions which have reached us, state in concise yet pathetic terms how helpful our universal *olla podrida* has proved to all ranks, all classes, all creeds, from the king sitting on his crown to the labourer sitting on his cottage.

The chief of a Central African tribe, whose name is unfortunately illegible, has graciously permitted us to make use of the following unique testimonial:—

Literal translation.—"Having devoured your omniscience for the past fortnight I have now renounced cannibalism for ever."

A famous Field-Marshal, whose name we are obliged to suppress in deference to the wishes of the Army Council, allows us to print his opinion of the *Omniscients' Omnium-gatherum*, which he has lately purchased out of his winnings at *Kriegspiel*:—

"I am convinced that the study of these massive and magniloquent volumes cannot but conduce to the inauguration of a pacific millennium. So appalling is the amount of warfare recorded in these pages that if it could only be made compulsory for every private soldier to commit them to memory the fighting instinct would be irreparably atrophied, and the question of international disarmament solved by a universal military strike."

A famous Poet, whose name we are obliged to withhold in deference to his notorious modesty, allows us to print the following appreciation:—

"In the opinion of this writer your work has only one serious drawback. Its attractions are so absorbing that for the last three weeks the fount of his inspiration has been checked, and not a single line has been added to the masterpieces with which he has already enriched the treasure-house of English literature. The loss, however, may be compensated by future gain, as this long abstinence from the Pierian spring can hardly fail to provoke a recurrence of the divine *afflatus* in its most acute form."

A pronounced Vegetarian sends the following remarkable testimony from Pythagoras Mansions, Woking:—



DISTINCTION WITHOUT DIFFERENCE.

She. "I'M TOLD YOU BELIEVE IN NOTHING."

He. "I NEVER SAID SO. I SAID I BELIEVED ONLY IN WHAT I UNDERSTOOD."

"Your wonderful work is a veritable beanfeast of mental proteids. Since embarking on its perusal I have been able so to reduce my daily diet that before long I hope to be able to subsist on one nut cutlet and two gooseberries *per diem*."

A Rural Dean forwards us the subjoined flattering estimate of our universal Brain-feeder:—

"I have only one thing to say against your *magnum opus*, and that is that I find it so fascinating that my work is apt to suffer in consequence. For instance, the other day I was so deeply immersed in your priceless pemmican of fact and fancy that I entirely forgot to prepare my

Sunday sermon. But hurriedly consulting the index under the headings PERICLES, BOSSUET, LUTHER and SWEDENBORG, I was enabled to treat my congregation to such a compendious and illuminating discourse that the parish is still reverberating with the echoes of my eloquence."

A great Pianist sends us the following gratifying letter from the Æolian Hall:—

"Your *Omnium-gatherum* is colossal. I have not touched the keyboard for five days, but when I do it will be with a reinforced brain power that will stagger humanity and cause THALBERG to turn in his tomb."

IN MEMORIAM.

Spencer Compton Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire.

BORN 1833. DIED MARCH 24, 1908.

If to have held his way with steadfast will,
Unspoiled of Fortune, deaf to praise or blame,
Asking no favour but to follow still
The patriot's single aim:—

If, in contempt of other pride of race,
By honesty that chose the nobler part,
Careless of fame's reward, to win a place
Near to the common heart:—

If these be virtues large, heroic, rare,
Then is it well with him, the dead, to-day,
Who leaves a public record clean and fair,
That Time shall not gainsay. O. S.

WHY NOT?

THE "Grand Guignol" performances by the Parisian company at the Shaftesbury Theatre have so successfully tickled the palates of jaded British playgoers in search of a really cheery entertainment that before long we shall probably see some enterprising London manager providing them with something similar, in a language they understand even better than French. The theatre will perhaps be re-christened "The Grown-up Punch and Judy Playhouse," or "The Snippet Show," and the morning after the opening Mr. Punch anticipates finding in his daily journal some such notice as the following:—

SHRIEKS AND SHUDDERS AT THE SNIPPET-SHOW.

A THOROUGHLY ENJOYABLE EVENING.

London has seen "*La Ville Lumière*," and gone one better! With yesterday evening began a brighter, happier era for our long-depressed British Drama. We cordially congratulate the management of "The Snippet Show Theatre" on the triumphant success with which they have assimilated and improved upon the dramatic ideals and methods of our livelier neighbours across the Channel. Every one of the five playlets in their present programme may be relied upon to furnish the spectator's spinal marrow with that peculiar *frisson* of delicious horror which is the infallible test of all Great Art. Last night, indeed, two eminent dramatic critics fainted in their stalls, and another had to be carried out in an epileptic fit, while the tumultuous applause was frequently enhanced by violent hysterics from ladies in all parts of the house.

The first drama, "*The Way He Should Go*," by Miss VIRGINIA JUNKETT and Miss PRISCILLA BUBB, shows us a room in a fifth-story flat, where a momentous discussion is proceeding between a typical Father and Mother (Mr. CHARNELL SCULLY and Miss CASSANDRA STAIR) concerning the education of their infant son. The Father is determined to send him to a Public School "to make a man of him." The Mother, fearing that the boy's individuality would be destroyed and his spirits cowed by bullying, insists on his being brought up at home under private tuition. A wonderful duologue, reminding one, by its strange mysticism and the lurid side-lights it throws on the past and present relations between the pair, of the Norwegian Master himself! The child is

sent for, and the final choice referred to him. The poor little fellow (most pathetically played by little Miss BIRDIE NICKERSON) can only answer that, of the two alternatives, he prefers his Mother's. Whereupon the exasperated Father, in a burst of ungovernable rage, hurls him through the open window. A sickening thud is heard below, followed by confused cries of horror. "The area railings are spiked," shrieks the agonised Mother. "You have ruined our only son." "I have saved him," is the Father's grim retort. "No one now will ever reproach him for being a milksop!" Then, as the curtain falls, both remember with unavailing remorse that, after all, the boy might have attended a Public School as a day-boarder!

"*The Hydrophobic*," by Mr. ALARIC PAPSEY, was of a somewhat lighter order. A jovial householder, returning late from a fancy-dress ball at Covent Garden, is unrecognised by his faithful hound, which fixes its teeth in his nose. Alarmed by the absence of all sensibility in that organ, which he has read is a sure symptom of approaching hydrophobia, the Master orders the dog to be destroyed, and a doctor sent for. Alone on the stage, his symptoms increase in violence. The extraordinarily humorous effects that Mr. ACTÆON HORNIMAN achieved in this soliloquy—his furious snaps at the furniture, his lips white with real foam, his deadly terror of a soda-water syphon, and, finest of all, his dying convulsions—cannot be described here. Suffice it that they are strong enough to draw all London. The doctor, on arriving, removes the dead man's nose, which proves to be merely pasteboard, while the dog is pronounced perfectly sane. "There is a worse disease than Hydrophobia!" he says. "We call it *Imagination*!" which brings the curtain down in a gale of laughter.

The third item on the bill, "*Pinned In*," by Mrs. EUNICE ORRED, is so daringly unconventional and so appallingly gruesome that it requires an iron nerve to sit it out—though that, of course, is not likely to deter the public from thronging the box office. Just before the curtain rises we hear a grinding, deafening crash, with a roar of escaping steam, and heartrending screams for help. Then a portion of a derailed express is discovered, in the wreckage of which a wealthy financier is seen to be imprisoned. He frantically offers half his fortune to the man who will get him out before the flames (for the wreckage has caught fire) reach him. Unfortunately for him, the only person in a position to rescue him is a platelayer, who, having formerly been ruined by the financier's dishonesty, very naturally declines to render any assistance.

The grim humour of this scene was positively electrifying. But we must confess that, before the moment at which the unhappy financier is, by a marvellously contrived illusion, slowly consumed in full sight of the audience, we made a hasty retreat to the nearest refreshment-bar. So we can only record that the curtain had to be raised nine times before the house had grown weary of expressing its enthusiasm.

After this, "*Grandfather's Clock*," by Messrs. JEM JAMIESON and GOTTHEMAR GEHN, seemed comparatively tame. The plot is simple. A collector has just purchased an antique eight-day clock at an auction. It will not go, although it persists in striking thirteen every quarter of an hour, and the local Clock-winder is called in to consult and advise. As he opens the case the corpse of an aged man topples forward in an advanced stage of decay, but the Clock-winder is just able to identify his great-grandfather, who mysteriously disappeared on the Coronation day of the late QUEEN VICTORIA. This little trifle is very slight, but it has the

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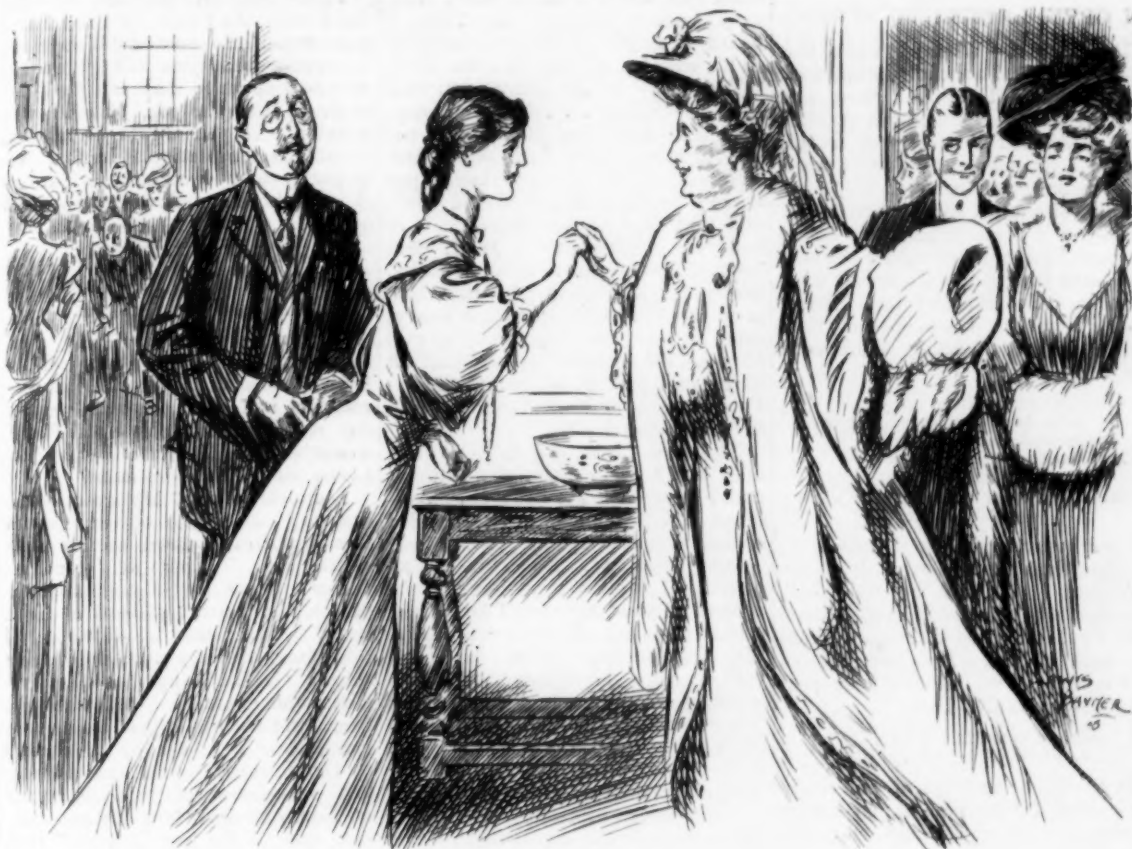
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PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI. APRIL 1, 1908.



HAPPY AFTERTHOUGHTS.

JAPAN (to American Eagle). "BUT HOW SWEET OF YOU TO COME ALL THIS WAY ON PURPOSE TO SEE ME!"
EAGLE. "WHY, YES, I THOUGHT YOU'D BE PLEASED!"



SHOW SUNDAY.

Wife of distinguished artist (to departing visitor, who has been tea-ing sumptuously for the last half-hour). "GOOD-BYE. SO NICE OF YOU TO HAVE COME! I HOPE YOU LIKED THE PICTURES?"

Visitor. "PICTURES? THERE! I KNEW THERE WAS SOMETHING I'D FORGOTTEN!"

merit of freshness, and its authors may certainly be encouraged to try again.

The concluding piece, "*The Electrocuting Cell*," by Mr. JEREMIAH RIPPIN, was more farcical in character. We are shown the Electrocuting Chamber, with its dread paraphernalia, all prepared for action. The condemned man, never having been electrocuted before, professes his utter inability to understand how the apparatus is worked. So the executioner obligingly illustrates the process by seating himself in the fatal chair. No sooner has he done so than the convict switches on the current and escapes, leaving his victim to expire in acute agony. A smart skit on Capital Punishment which provoked the audience to vociferous merriment.

Next week we are promised Mr. LARRY O'HOOOLIGAN'S scathing exposure of Army Discipline, "*The Last Stand*." We hear that its first scene will depict the pitiable cowardice displayed by a handful of British officers and men, besieged in a stockade by an overwhelming force of savages. The Englishmen offer to betray important strategical secrets if their lives are only spared; but, being unable to express themselves in any foreign language, are massacred to a man. The second scene represents the unveiling of a memorial to their memory, with orators delivering eloquent tributes to the heroes' self-sacrifice at their Country's call.

This mordant satire is certain to delight the growing section of Anti-Militarists.

We should add that a staff of doctors and nurses are kept in readiness at the theatre, and bottles of strong smelling-salts may be obtained on hire from any of the attendants.

F. A.

Mr. Punch gave his readers a few facts about the house-fly last week. Since then, however, an important discovery has been made by a correspondent of *The Daily Graphic*, who writes to that paper as follows:—

"I have found a very effective way to clear a room of the house-fly, and also the blue-bottle, is to use a butterfly-net. When you have caught some put the net on the floor, kill them, turn them out, and commence afresh."

Mr. Punch heartily approves of this plan, which may be adapted with equal ease to an overflow of hippopotamuses, white-mice, or electric-eels—the root idea of "killing, turning out, and commencing afresh," remaining the same.

"Examinations are held in the Senate House (which is comparatively) and in the Guildhall, and (often) in the Corn Exchange (!), a cold, cheerless building."—*The Record*.

This (really) is (!) † the §*** record!!!?

AN OPEN LETTER TO SPRING.

DEAR LADY,—When I woke this morning to find another damp, dark miserable day I resolved there and then to write to you about it. Is this, I decided to ask you, is this the best you can do? You know, I don't believe you're trying.

It is, of course, more usual to address you in verse at this time of the year; and I should have done so, only I thought you would be tired of verse by now. You mustn't think that I couldn't do it. I could easily; indeed I began something which went like this:—

"O Muse, who never failed me yet;
Save once—when on some Indian tribe row
A chastely-worded chansonnette
Turned out an epic to an eye-brow—
Tell me, my pretty,
Is this the spring, or not, or what, and where 's
NEORETTI?"

I might have gone on; but the difficulty of finding any sort of rhyme to "ZAMBRA" in the second verse steadied me; and, as I say, I knew you would be tired of poetry—even the best. Yet my Muse would have at it again, and we initiated an appeal *ad misericordiam*. Thus:

"I stood in tears amid the flowers,
And wait'd for you howlers and howlers."

If I must be truthful, it was really then that I saw how much better would be a few stirring words in prose.

My dear, you must do your best for me. Give me a fine April and May, and your sisters shall do what they like with the other months. I am trying to encourage you. Yesterday I took out my bat (the one with which I made that twenty-two last year), and oiled it carefully. She will see I am waiting for her, thought I, and she will come tomorrow. But you didn't, you know.

I don't ask you to think only of me. Think of the flowers and butterflies and birds, and the man who wants to write to the papers to say that he has heard the cuckoo, or caught a tortoiseshell in his library; I doubt if you are being quite fair to them. If I were a gardener I would tell a harrowing tale to bring you to shame. A tragedy of—of dahlias, full of hope and promise, cut off in their prime. Knowing what you do about dahlias you may say that this is absurd; but if I had given you the Latin name you would never have recognised them, and you would have been so sorry. What of the blighted *Frustranea*? Aha, you never thought of him.

You gave us one beautiful day last

week (for which I thank you); and, as I walked through the Park, I heard a ringdove say reproachfully to his wife (as they do on a fine day), "You—*did*—do it—Ruby—you—*did*—do it—Ruby. . . . Yes." I suppose that Ruby had gone out of her way to attract him; had decked herself out a bit; had, perhaps, put herself forward rather—for a bird; and that now he was throwing it in her face. (The cad.) Well, dear Spring, I want you to think of Ruby. She must be feeling now that she need not have been in such a hurry, after all; that she might just as well have waited another month; that all for nothing had she been unmaidenly. Poor dear, you have been cruel to her, have you not?

To leave birds and flowers (for, after all, I know little about them, and I may be misjudging their feelings), and to come back to myself: I have this also against you, Spring—your fickleness. No doubt we all have that against you (as indeed against all your sex); but I fancy that certain of us are affected particularly. The householder steps into his garden after breakfast, takes the morning for a moment, and says: "A warm day, my dear. I will have my light coat." Very good. But have you ever thought of us others, perched on the tops of high buildings, with no means of tasting the day?

I used to think that the bath was a sure test. When at the first plunge a loud cry of "Help!" came unexpectedly to my lips, then I knew that I should want my thickest coat. When I uttered an unstudied "Oh!" something lighter was necessary. But could I rise silent from the waves then I felt that I might venture into the open all unprotected. Lately, however, something seems to have happened to the cistern. They must ice my water; anyhow, I say "Help!" every morning.

So now I have to take my chance. It was not fair to me, Spring, to give us that glorious day after a succession of cold ones, so that I marched round London in two waistcoats and the thickest of ulsters.

Well, my dear, let me beg you once more. Pull yourself together, and give us a beautiful April. Never mind ZAMBRA or the young woman at *The Daily Graphic*. Put on your greenest frock, your sweetest smile; be your own sunny self. I know that the poems addressed to you must make you long to weep; but see—I have spared you mine. Come then, buck up. Be sure that your smallest effort will be appreciated by your admirers. . . .

P.S.—You will get this on April the First. As I look up I see that it has turned into a beautiful day; and I suppose that you will go on like this now so as to make an April fool of me. How like you! You know, I wondered if you would be able to resist the temptation. In fact that is partly why I wrote. So perhaps it is I who am making an April fool of you! A. A. M.

BLANCHE'S LETTERS.

A LEAP-YEAR DANCE.

DEAREST DAPHNE,—My *miracéme* Leap-Year Fancy Dress Dance was a simply howling success, and has had an *enormously* gratifying result in the shape of HILDEGARDE'S engagement to Lord WIDELANDS, of which more anon.

I appeared as "My great-grandmother," after one of our ROMNEY family portraits down at Old Hall. JOSIAH said, "Where do I come in? I can't figure as 'My great-grandfather,' for I don't go back as far as that." "Oh, that's all right," I told him. "Gives you all the wider range. Think what an *immense* choice of characters you can pick from, and *still* figure as 'Your great-grandfather!'" Finally, he decided on Dr. JOHNSON (one of the few celebrities he knows of); but, as he had no BOZZY to draw him out and make him say, "No, sir," and "Hold your tongue, sir," and all those sorts of things that have made the old Doctor famous (and a very easy way of getting famous, I think!) he fell rather flat.

BOSH and WEE-WEE came as a pair of Historical Puzzles. BOSH was that mysterious Man in the Iron Mask who wrote the *Letters of Junius*, you know, and said "Remember!" to somebody; and WEE-WEE was PERKIN WARBECK, who said he was one of the Princes who had been smothered in the Tower, when everyone else said he wasn't. She was got up rather like a Principal Boy, and I will own here that, when I first saw her, I felt a bit cheap, and out of conceit with "My great-grandmother." BABS was the Spirit of the Age. She was all hung with symbolical things. I daresay it was very clever, but nobody took the trouble to stop and learn her.

NORTY rather offended some people by coming as Influenza. He was muffled up in grey draperies with a horrid little black figure on them that he said was the microbe of it, and he had on a sort of crown made of small quinine bottles. He said he didn't suppose anyone would have

the courage to ask him to dance, but plenty did.

LORD WIDELANDS, who, as of course you know, has suffered for some time from eligibility in an *acute* form, and has earned quite a name among the *demoiselles à marier* as a *passive resistor*, looked very well as a Court Jester in motley, with cap and bells. It certainly is a dress, I allow, that wants a *particularly* neat figure and straight legs, and Lord WIDELANDS has *not*, perhaps, exactly a neat figure, and is just a *weeny* bit bandy; but still he looked very nice, and was quite a success. He kept up the character with a lot of funniments. NORTY said they were old chestnuts that he'd learned up on purpose. What if he had? We can't *all* be spontaneous. HILDEGARDE was simply a *dream* (everyone remarked on her likeness to me) as Aurora, in clouds of rosy *tulle-de-soie*, with the morning-star on her forehead.

DOLLY DE LACY made quite a small sensation as "Turkish Delight—the Belle of the Harem." He certainly did both look and act the part à *merveille*. Nobody would have guessed that he wasn't a girl, and an Eastern girl at that! He was brought by POPSY, Lady RAMSGATE (she was the cause of her grand-daughter's engagement to DOLLY being broken off, you remember; the girl got so jealous of her granny). POPSY came as *Little Boy Blue*. JOSIAH was furious when he caught sight of her, and said she oughtn't to have been let in, looking like that. I believe he would have liked to turn both her and poor DOLLY out of the house! He doesn't get a *bit* more up to date in his ideas.

And now, my dear, for little HILDEGARDE, and the way she brought off her *coup*!

She and Lord WIDELANDS, who've been rather pals for some time, were sitting out when the rush for supper began.

"Won't you take me in?" said the Court Jester. "I don't mind," answered Aurora, rising. "Well, you ought to offer me your arm," said the Court Jester. "That's correct Leap-Year form, isn't it?" "There it is, then," said Aurora, holding out her arm; "but I can't offer it without its *hand*, can I?"

Wasn't it smart of the child? She's not been under my wing for nothing! The engagement will be announced almost at once.

NORTY said rather a nasty thing when I whispered the news to him that night before he left.

"The Court Jester will have to alter the spelling of his front word."

He *must* have his joke at any cost.



"THIRTY SHILLINGS FOR THE PICTURE! ANY ADVANCE? GOING AT THIRTY BOB! OH, I SAY, GENTLEMEN, IT'S WORTH EVER SO MUCH MORE. THERE'S A COPY OF IT IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY."

I don't know whether I'm going to be very angry with him about it or not.

Old DUNSTABLE is just mad, I hear, and looks as black at me as she dares. Never mind. My favourite, little Sis, has romped home a winner, while the old Duchess's girls and a crowd of other "probables" find themselves among the "also rans." Peace be with her, poor old dear! I can afford to ignore her and be magnanimous, for it's the *second* time her matrimonial apple-cart has been upset by our family!

Ever thine, BLANCHE.

BOAT-RACE PRACTICE.

Unfortunate Incident.

"Cambridge had a row with a Thames Rowing Club scratch eight on the morning's ebb tide."

The Times.

"Our Berlin Correspondent telegraphs that by order of the Emperor William the trousers of seamen of the German navy are in future to be made about two centimetres wider."

The Times.

The rumour that Lord TWEEDMOUTH has written a letter to the EMPEROR pointing out that the trousers of German seamen are already five times as wide as those of English bluejackets is causing great distress to the Military Correspondent of the *Berliner Tageblatt*.

"Anything that anyone can possibly require can be obtained as cheaply at the *Observer* Printing Works, and (as our samples will prove) as well printed (*sic*) as they could be anywhere."—*The I—Observer*.

The "*sic*" is ours, and we have put it there to call attention to the folly of offering proofs when it is so much safer to make statements.

PADDY.

(With acknowledgments in several quarters.)

Now let me sing of the prowess of PADDY the speedy left-winger,

PADDY the pet of the crowd, PADDY the pride of his pals.
No one more skilful than he ever scudded along any touch-line,

Swift as a giddy gazelle, swift as a bolt from the blue;
Swift as the ready retort of a cabby that's baulked by a 'bus-man;

Swift as the flash of my brain weaving you verses like these.

Ever since he was "induced" to enrol with the Rottenham Roosters

(Who, to secure such a plum, paid a phenomenal fee)—
Ever since PADDY, I say, first joined the redoubtable Roosters,

Donned the uproarious shirt striped with the red-white-and-blue,

Made his *début* with *éclat* (and *aplomb*) v. the Chippendale Chestnuts—

Right from that day until this, PADDY's been Rottenham's pet.

Note the reception he gets as he enters the crowded arena—

Plaudits and, now and again, little tit-bits of advice:
"Nah thin, PADDY me boy, give 'em socks"—but why ever not stockings?—

"Give 'em wot for, do yer 'ear? Tell 'em they'd better go 'ome!"

"Nah thin, PADDY me boy, you're a-goin' to be beaten—I don't think!"

(Neat little touch like the last clearly betokens the wag).

My! how they hang on each twist and each turn of his lithe little body,

Take in the points of his shirt—whether he rolls up the sleeves,

How many buttons there are, and whether he fastens the top one:

All, to the man in the crowd, matters of life and of death.

There goes a roar of delight as Paddy bowls somebody over,

Rolling him right in the mud, spoiling the bloom of his shorts.

There goes another that's louder, for PADDY is sprinting his fastest,

Swift as—you'll find it above—straight for the opposite goal.

Now the crowd rises *en masse*—more French, you will notice—on tip-toe,

Watches that slim little chap going for all he is worth;
Watches with eyes that are glued and with breath that (believe me) is bated,

Thrilled through and through to the bone: *points in the League are at stake!*

See, he has diddled the half—but, oh, will be diddle the full-back?

Look! he is past in a flash . . . Gad, he has got 'em a goal!

* * * * *

So every Saturday aft. he becomes more and more of a hero,

PADDY the pet of the crowd, PADDY the pride of his pals.

"Cricketers will be glad to hear that—narrowly escaped being killed last week."—*The People*.

Probably he was a very slow scorer.

ALL ABOUT THE CREWS.

THE waterman was standing on the edge of the tow-path near the Putney boathouses, and had just finished shouting something stentorian and (to me) quite unintelligible at the commander of a string of barges that were going up on the last of the flood. The commander, however, had evidently understood him and had answered in similar language with various pantomimic gestures thrown in. The waterman laughed heartily. "I told yer 'e done it—ah, and last Thursday, too! 'E never went back on 'is word. Beg yer pardon, sir; I took you for old JOE. My eyesight ain't what it was. Oxford and Cambridge crews? No, you've missed 'em. They went 'ome 'alf-an-hour back, but they'll be out again in about three hours' time on the ebb. Can't wait for it? Well, it's a pity. They're a likely lot, both on 'em; 'andles their oars well and sets up to their work." He accepted a cigar, lit it, and puffed. "Which on 'em's goin' to win? Ah, I've got my own fancy, you know. Can't 'elp 'avin' it when I seen 'em every day. They can't both win. That's what I allus say: one on 'em's got to go faster than tother; and when it comes to that there you are; but they're all tryin' 'ard. There was a bit of work Cambridge done yesterday—no, it was the day before yesterday. I remember the day 'cos it was the same day last year: I 'ooked the ole gal out o' the water. It was nine o'clock of a Toosday night, and I was settin' by the path near the pier down there, when I see 'er come along. 'Well, if 'e won't come 'ome,' she sez, 'ere goes,' she sez. 'I told 'im I'd do it,' I 'eard 'er quite plain, same as I sees you, and with that she give a shriek and climbs up the railing and over she goes. She'd mistook the tide, for the ebb was three parts run out, and there warn't more 'n a foot or two of water where she jumped. She stood there 'ollerin' blue ruin, and I got 'old of a skiff by the 'ard there and after 'er I went. 'Don't save me, sailor,' she sez when she see me comin', 'I've sworn to die.' 'So you shall, ma'am,' I sez, 'some other day. You'll die all right, never fear; but you've got to come aboard 'ere now,' and with that I ketched 'old of 'er. It took me ten minutes to 'eave 'er in, she was stuck so 'tight in the mud. She kep' cryin' out that she wanted to die first; but she never let go o' me, and I got 'er ashore at last. It was only a 'alf-crown job. 'Er ole man wasn't too pleased when I took 'er back to 'im, but 'e paid up."

"Then you think it'll be a good race?" I ventured to put in, just to bring him back to his subject.

"Race? 'Ah, you'll see a race all right, never fear. There'll be some 'ammer an' tongs work between this and 'Ammersmith; but there's only one in it, same as my little dawg when they set 'im up agin a rat last Saturday at the 'Compasses.' It was one shake and no more wanted. 'E's got some terrier in 'im and a bit o' bull corsed with a spanel; a very game dawg 'e is, but 'is teeth is gettin' a bit loose. It was all along o' the distemper. D'ye know 'ow I cured 'im? Larded 'is nose with a lump o' tar. Stockolloma tar, mind you, not ornery tar. Ornery tar's no good for distemper, but this Stockolloma kind's a prime stuff."

He relit his cigar and I brought him round to the subject of coxswains.

"Ah, you may well say coxens. They're little chaps, but they've got to 'ave a big 'eart to steer this course. There's a cruel eddy when you come out through 'Ammersmith Bridge, and Barnes ain't much better; more by token it was at 'Ammersmith I got upset when I went after a dead un. Bobbin' along 'e was, but I



LONG-FELT WANTS IN THE HUNTING FIELD.

A MECHANICAL FOX, TO DRAW OFF THE FOOT-PEOPLE.

lorst 'im. 'It's five bob lorst,' sez my missus when I come 'ome to dry myself, and that's all the pity I got. Two year ago that was; and JOE NAGGETT found 'im 'alf-way to Barnes. Some folk gets all the luck. But I never was one to complain. I didn't grudge 'im to JOE. JOE's all right, and 'e's got three more kids nor me. 'Ow many 'ave I got? Why seven: four boys and three gals. They all come to see me when I was in 'orspital last year with the ploral-noomoner, and the nurse she sez, 'Here's a pacter show,' she sez, 'comin' along the ward,' she sez. I didn't want any tellin'. I seen 'em all right. There was a pore chap next me coughed mortal bad, and I wasn't too bright, mind yer, but we'd got a bit of a laugh for the kids. Well, good-day, sir, thankee, sir. Pity you can't stay to see the crews to-day, but I've told you all I knows myself, and you might stop 'ere for a month o' Sundays and you wouldn't get to know no more."

GENIUS AND MELODY.

COUNT TOLSTOI's recent declaration of his preference for the classical composers has prompted our enterprising contemporary *Polyhymnia* to circularise a number of distinguished British authors with a view to ascertain their musical likes and dislikes. Out of a vast number of answers we select the following:—

Mr. CLEMENT SHORTER, writing on behalf of Mr. GEORGE MEREDITH, stated that his friend the famous fictionist was much addicted to the compositions of the musician known as CLEMENS NON PAPA. Some excellent photographs of Mr. MEREDITH listening to Mr. SHORTER playing on the pianola have just been published in Dork-

ing, and are bringing visitors in their hundreds to the quaint old Surrey township.

Mr. H— C— playfully confessed to a natural preference for the music of his ancestor TUBAL. For the rest it was enough to say that he had been elected by a large majority to the House of Keys on a broadly progressive programme. Mr. C— added that he thought there was a great deal of insincerity in the cult of WAGNER. At any rate the queue at Covent Garden when the *Ring* was being performed was not a quarter as long as that which attended the production of *The Prodigal Son*.

Miss M— C—, who, it is well known, is proficient on the piano, and the mandolin (*Who's Who*, p. 398), and began to compose an opera entitled *Ginevra da Siena* when barely fourteen (*ibid.*), professed her inability to appreciate a good deal of modern music. Still, the name of perhaps her most famous heroine was MAVIS.

The Poet Laureate in a long autograph letter observed: "This writer has always been remarkable for the divided allegiance which he has paid to horticulture and the Muses, and, as the greater includes the less, so must distinction in the service of Apollo *ex hypothesi* involve a complete mastery of all the apparatus possessed by Euterpe and Polyhymnia. It was BROWNING's entire lack of melody that prevented his making good his claim to be considered a major poet, and thereby earning the privilege of writing to the newspapers in the third person. Moreover, BROWNING's repute was fatally damaged by the discovery that not only the *Ring* but the book had been written by WAGNER. In conclusion this writer ventures to recall the following couplet:—

Aim at a style banjovial, not Brahmsy,
If you one day would quaff the Laureate's Malmsey."



THE HONEYMOON.

He. "WHEN DID YOU DISCOVER FIRST THAT YOU LOVED ME, SWEETHEART?"

She. "WHEN I FOUND MYSELF GETTING ANGRY EVERY TIME PEOPLE CALLED YOU AN IDIOT."

A PESSIMIST'S LONG VIEWS.

THE OPENING OF THE PORTLAND HALL OF VARIETIES.

(From a Newspaper of 1918.)

LAST night saw the formal opening of the magnificent new music-hall, to which the name The Portland has been given. This building, it will be remembered, began its career as the Shakspeare Memorial Theatre of National Dramatic Art, just as some years earlier the Palace music-hall had begun as the English Opera House. It is perhaps well that the early chapters in the lives of such establishments should be chequered, since it thus becomes the more easy for them to be made brilliantly successful when they fall into the right hands. The end, at any rate, justifies the means. A more comfortable hall than the new Portland could not be imagined. The decorative scheme in white and crimson and gold is exceedingly gay and attractive, the seats are

luxurious, and each one is provided with a ledge for glasses and an ash-tray, while the view of the stage from every point is perfect.

The original statues around the walls were fated to be a little out of place, but a few deft strokes on the part of a staff of sculptors put that all right. It is astonishing, indeed, what a clever craftsman can do with a mallet and chisel. For example, the bust of Mr. SIDNEY LEE, who was one of the prime movers in the original disastrous scheme, needed but a very little treatment to be transformed into that of HARRY LAUDER, one of the pillars and glories of the variety stage—in fact, one might almost say its BEN JONSON, if, as is surely only just, we consider DAN LENO as its SHAKSPEARE. Among other transformed busts are those of Mr. GOLLANCZ, now GEORGE ROBEX, and Mr. SPIELMANN, now LITTLE TICH.

The opening programme was of record brilliance. The lion of the evening was unquestionably LARRY

O'CONNOR, the Irish comedian, who sang "What is Whisky?" with all his incomparable humour, following it with "The Green Petticoat" and "Kathleen of Killarney with the wicked black Eye." Among the stars who supported him were TRICKSY TRIXIE, the new comedienne; SOL LAZARUS, the Jewish patter humourist; HUZ and BUZ, back-answer specialists; and the famous Australian dancer and *poscuse* GERTRUDE WATERS, the rage of Paris and Vienna, in a series of Biblical horn-pipes with waxwork effects. Drama itself was not wholly absent, since for twenty minutes Mr. MARRON GLASSIE and Company kept the house in a roar with the comic absurdities of a new sketch entitled "Mother-in-Law's Kippers." The audience was enthusiastic and called for the manager again and again, and it was long after midnight before the curtain was allowed finally to fall. London is heartily to be congratulated on its latest place of entertainment.



COURAGE DEFERRED.

MR. ASQUITH. "THAT'S RIGHT, MY BEAUTY, HAVE A LOOK AT IT. BUT WE'RE NOT TAKING IT JUST NOW. WE'RE GOING ROUND BY THE GATE TO-DAY."

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

EXTRACTED FROM THE DIARY OF TOBY, M.P.

House of Commons, Monday, March 23.—Nothing can exceed completeness and weight of gravity with which the House when it pleases can lend itself to what Mr. CARLYLE delighted to stigmatise as a simulacrum. Haven't for long time heard anything of Chinese Labour question. As was set forth to-night, when present Government came into power they found 50,000 Chinamen in Transvaal mines. These have been reduced to 34,000, of whom 25,000 will this year go back to home and beauty, the remaining 9,000 disappearing by January, 1910. Labour Members and Radicals, clamorous in denunciation of Chinese Labour, have accepted this process whilst lamenting the necessity of observing contracts which accounts for its slowness. Suddenly, unexpectedly, on motion for second reading of Consolidated Fund Bill, ALFRED LYTTLETON appeared at the Table with solemn announcement that he has "a very grave matter to bring before the House."

Turns out to be our old friend. It happens that Peckham polls to-morrow. Last time it so disported itself, Chinese Labour question much to front. Many votes filched from Unionist candidate by representation of the Heathen Chinese enslaved in order that the pockets of a class picturesquely described as helots of Park Lane might be filled. An attractive flash of poetic justice if tables can be turned and votes recaptured at Peckham by denouncing Government as false to their pledges, as having climbed into office on back of AH SING, leaving him to his fate when they arrive.

On face of it, in view of figures cited, this a little difficult. But at election times, whether dated 1906 or 1908, elector too busy to bother about facts. What he likes is bold statement tersely put. Accordingly to-night ALFRED LYTTLETON, more in sorrow than in anger, not only denounced Government for breaking their pledges, but was understood to have accused ASQUITH of deliberately intending to do so at the moment when he assented to re-enactment of Ordinance.

A serious matter this. Had such charges been bandied across the dinner-table fisticuffs would have followed. Conveyed in written form, there would have been action for libel. But Lor' bless you, we know each other in the House of Commons. It is the Unionists' little game to-



"WHY THIS SIMIAN LAUGHTER?"

(Quotation from remarks by Mr. Swift MacNeill.)

This is how, for some reason or another, Mr. Swift MacNeill (and no one else) saw the Unionist Party on the night of the Peckham Election.

(With a certain melancholy precedent in mind, Our Artist, having the instinct of self-preservation somewhat strongly developed, has discreetly abstained from showing the hon. member himself.)

day. Two years ago the Liberals were ready to start one on same lines. ASQUITH, being, after all, only human, a little restive under personal charge. House, little more than half full, listened as languidly as if ALFRED were stating an abstract case. Had charges been embodied in Resolution on which a division might be challenged, things would have been different. PRINCE ARTHUR knows better than that. Not the man gratuitously to provide opportunity for Government ranks to close up and Ministers to receive vote of confidence in their policy on Chinese Labour question. Peckham didn't want Resolutions. What it hankered after were allegations, and here they were plain and plump. Fraud, Hypocrisy, Betrayal were writ large in indictment of Government.

This done, subject dropped. Consolidated Fund Bill read a second time without further ado. Army Annual Bill passed same stage with-

out remark; House adjourned at twenty minutes past eight.

Business done.—The Heathen Chinese once more; this time under new auspices.

Tuesday.—House of Parliament suddenly turned into House of mourning. News flashed across land and sea comes announcing death of Duke of DEVONSHIRE. Passed away this morning at Cannes, remote from the turmoil of London life. No time to prepare requiem oration. What had to be said and done must be accomplished straightway. Better thus. More fully in accord with the simplicity of the nature of the statesman lamented. In the Commons, Questions over, ASQUITH in a score of sentences voiced the feeling of the silent audience that bared its head in reverent memory. As PRINCE ARTHUR said, "tribute to a great man departed could not have been proffered in terms more exquisitely or more fittingly chosen." As usual on these



STOUT AND BITTER.

Bung. "So much for Mr. Asquith an' 'is little games! 'E arst for the 'bar of public opinion,' an' I 've give 'im the opinion of the 'Public Bar' any'ow, an' that 'll last 'im for a bit!'"

occasions—alack how they multiply!—PRINCE ARTHUR himself rose to full height. In the Lords a pall appropriately fell over the half-empty Chamber. The shy March sun withdrew behind the afternoon cloud. Lack of opportunity to prepare funeral orations more marked here than in the Commons. It was Lord ROSEBERY who, in unexpected speech, uplifted the level of oratory. No detriment to effect of his speech that, emotion overcoming him as he thought of the lost colleague and friend, there was occasionally difficulty in catching the closing words of his sentences.

The dead Duke had many honest prejudices. One, most strongly marked, was against speech-making, whether he or other were the transgressor. As ROSEBERY said, "no man spoke with so much previous anguish or so much misery at the time of utterance"—a picturesque sentence that recalled the familiar figure, whether at the Table of the House of Commons or the House of Lords.

Observing him at close range through the varying circumstances of thirty-four years of public life, I perceived close resemblance to the third Earl SPENCER, better known as Lord ALTHORP, who to his personal distress filled a large space in State affairs during the first half of the nineteenth

century. Both were men whose innate shyness gave something of clumsiness to their manner. Both loved field sports and desired nothing more than to be left to enjoy them. Both were reluctantly dragged into public life by a sense of duty. Equally devoid of personal ambition, both, to their pained surprise, found themselves exalted to the position of Leader of their Party in the House of Commons. Both won the esteem and confidence of political friends and foes by the simplicity of their manner, the integrity of their mind.

One night whilst ALTHORP led the House he had occasion to make a statement on a matter of fact which he had intended to support by citation of a document. When he reached the appointed place he discovered he had forgotten to bring the paper with him. This would have embarrassed some men. ALTHORP, with the imperturbability we have seen revived in HARTINGTON, explained the accident, and assured the House that if he had only been in a position to cite the particulars they would have found them convincing. His word was instantly and fully accepted. If ALTHORP said so, so it was.

The story is part of the life of Lord ALTHORP. To those who knew him in either House it will be recognised in every detail (not excepting the

omission to put an important document in his pocket) as characteristic of the statesman whose earlier name, Lord HARTINGTON, most readily comes to tongue or pen.

Business done.—Lords adjourn in token of respect to memory of Duke of DEVONSHIRE. The Commons busy themselves with Bill that, had he lived to deal with it, would have had his warm support—the Children's Charter.

House of Lords, Thursday.—Not heard much of late of Young WEMYSS. Silence accounted for. Been hatching a joke. Out to-day in Bill printed and circulated (at public expense), entitled an Act to Transfer all Private Property to a Commission. Lengthy preamble. Only one clause. This sets forth that property of all kinds, private and State, shall at the end of fourteen years be transferred to a permanent Commission, who shall manage and distribute it in the interests of Government and for the public good.

Young WEMYSS not the man to evade consequence of his own creation. Does not forget one of old time of whom it was written "He had his jest and they had his estate." Means to afford practical illustration of working of his proposed scheme. To that end, so SARK tells me, he is prepared, in anticipation of the date mentioned in Bill, to hand over his private property to be dealt with in accordance with its provisions. No. 23, St. James's Place, will shortly be in the market. Gosford House and Amisfield House, both situated in Haddingtonshire, will have new tenants. Closed will be the hospitable doors of Elcho Castle, Perth. Neidpath Castle, Peebles-shire, will go the way of Hayes Lodge, whilst Stanway Hall will, figuratively of course, absolutely as far as its present proprietor is concerned, sink in Moreton-in-the-Marsh.

Not often that a Member of either House bringing in a Bill is in position so strikingly to illustrate its working.

Business done.—Cost of Irish Administration discussed.

An indignant correspondent, writing to *The Mansfield Reporter* about the Licensing Bill, says of the present Government:—

"The sword of Demosthenes already hangs over its head, and 'tis to be hoped will soon fall."

DEMOSTHENES, however, only put pebbles, not swords, in his mouth to improve his elocution; the sword swallower of the circus is a later development.



TROUBLES OF THE TAXIMETER.

Jack (stopping taximeter hansom). "OLD 'ARD, MATE! WE AIN'T A-GOIN' TO SAIL WITH OUR FLAG 'ARF-MAST. THERE AIN'T ANY OF US DEAD ABOARD 'ERE, NOT BY A LONG CHALK!"

"WHAT IS WHISKY?"

[A Commission has recently been sitting in the hope of elucidating this problem.]

DAY by day in London's city
Meets a Court of London's best.
Wasting time and (more 's the pity)
Money on a futile quest;
Day by day each weighty sitter
Vainly asks, What Whisky is:—
Only those whose Drink is Bitter
Comprehend these mysteries.

Here in old and tempered England—
Still and sparkling, red and white—
All the costliest juices mingl' and
Tempt the connoisseur's delight;
All that brings the soul composure—
All that makes the heart rejoice—
Merely paying (through the nose)
your
Money, you can take your choice.

So to these, with all or any
Lotions ready to their will,
Whisky is but one of many,
Mere result of pot or still;
He that pines for information,
Let him pack his traps and roam,
And he'll get a revelation
That he'll never get at home.

Let him pass to Cancer's tropic,
"Where the best is like the
worst,"

And the one unfailing topic
Is a one unfailing thirst,
There to feel (as often since I'd
Gratefully have felt) the smart
Freez-y comfort down the inside
Which those orient "pegs"
impart:

Out in Quetta let him shiver,
When the mercury has passed
Zero, and the finest liver
Curdles at the cutting blast;
Where, lest aught the frame should
injure,

He may learn what 'tis to quaff
Brave Macdonalds, made of Ginger-
Wine and Whisky, half-and-half!

Thus beyond all other juices
Whisky serves in each extreme,
But when iron need reduces
Baggage almost to a dream;
When we roam through lands un-
trodden

By the aspiring feet of men,
When we're hungry, bored, or
sodden—

Then, by all the gods, oh then—

Caledonia! Caledonia!

Though a climate such as thine
Rather tends to give pneumonia
Than to nurse the tendrill vine,
When the world grows melancholic,
When, instinctively, the mind
Yearns to something alcoholic,
And the grape is left behind—

Though the spoils of sunnier countries
Have their merits not a few,
Nectar to the stricken hunt'r is
Thine unrivalled Mountain Dew!
For, whatever else be lacking
To his comforts, he can fit,
If he's any good at packing,
Whisky, somehow, in his kit.

Thus he sits, and as he measures
Out his dram he learns indeed
That above all costlier treasures
Is the Drink that serves his need;
Ay, and let the grave Commission
Find a better if they can,
Grasps this vital Definition:—
Whisky is the Friend of Man.

University Intelligence.

"The Emperor intimated that Mr. Hill was a
personal non granta."

The Isle of Man Daily Times.

CHARIVARIA.

MID-DEVON, Hereford, Worcester, Hastings, and Peckham have now spoken, and it looks as if the People were proving fractious. Instead of tackling the House of Lords the stupid voters appear to be determined to reform the House of Commons.

Peckham, we hear, still bears signs of the recent contest, many of the victorious side continuing to wear the party's colours on their noses.

The Liberals of Hastings are making a consolation gift to Mr. ROBERT VERNON HARCOURT, their unsuccessful candidate. Thrifty, thoughtful Liberals hope that this will not be taken as a precedent, as it might involve their party in great expense in the near future.

The Commander-in-Chief of the forces in Ireland has appealed to his men to smoke fewer cigarettes. Should his wishes be ignored it is not impossible, we hear, that the scope of the Children's Bill will be extended to include Infantry of all sorts.

It has been decided that there shall be no speeches at the forthcoming Royal Academy Banquet. It seems strange that in the case of such an old-established function it should become necessary to offer additional attractions to guests. For ourselves, we must confess we shall miss (in imagination) the spectacle of tired Cabinet Ministers making long speeches to prove that they know nothing, and care less, about Art.

Richmond estate agents have come to an agreement, *The Globe* informs us, to erect only one "To let" board on houses where formerly there had been as many as eight or nine such notices. This will render it difficult in future to describe a small garden as "richly wooded grounds."

Die Kreuzzeitung is annoyed with us for having passed our new Patent Law. It seems that this measure is creating the deplorable impression in Germany that we love ourselves more than we love the Germans.

"The motor-omnibus is the poor man's motor-car," says Alderman HOWLETT of Lambeth, "and can never be driven from the streets." We think that this statement is unfair. We have seen several of these vehicles successfully mount the pavement, and at least one has been known to enter a shop.

"Mr. H. M'LAREN, M.P., and Mr. ALBERT STANLEY, M.P.," we read, "were proceeding from Stone to

which is signed "Eve." This choice of *nom-de-guerre* strikes us as being rather unhappy. What can Eve know about Dress?

"A picture hat provides a delightfully soothing sensation of restfulness and innocence," says *The Gentlewoman*. "It would be difficult for a woman to commit a crime in a picture hat." And yet how easy for the man who is sitting behind it at a *matinée*!

To pat a man's back with one hand and to deal him a blow with the other is a curiously un-English proceeding, and Mr. J. WILLIAMS, of Oxford Road, Ealing, has our sympathy. We refer to the following paragraph which appeared at the foot of an article describing a Flower Show in *The Daily Telegraph* last week:

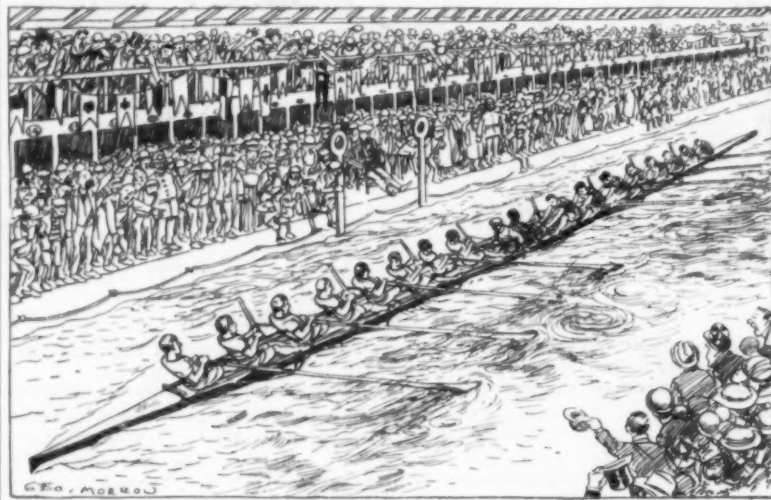
A dainty form of silvered table decoration was sent by J. WILLIAMS, Oxford-road, Ealing, and the value of Vall's Betle-cute, a well-known antidote for deposing these pests, so often found in greenhouses, was clearly demonstrated.

Sir ROBERT GIFFEN, speaking at the United Service Institution, appealed for a National War Chest. Given a sensible scheme of compulsory physical drill we do not see why Sir ROBERT's ambition should not be achieved.

Mr. BENJAMIN KIDD, we learn from an advertisement, is delighted with the first number of *The Children's Encyclopædia*. This is highly satisfactory, seeing that the very object of the book is to please the family of which he is an ornament.

"The birth of a camel, and its subsequent christening by Mr. Tree and his daughter, is a comparatively rare event in this country, but it is an every-day experience in countries like Egypt."—*The Sphere*.

In future, however, Mr. TREE wishes it to be known that he will be unable to go south of Khartoum for this purpose on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Camels born on a Friday night should be held over until the following Monday.



WHY NOT HAVE THE BOAT-RACE IN A SWIMMING-BATH, AND LET THE CREWS PULL AGAINST EACH OTHER IN ONE BOAT? IT WOULD BE SIMPLE, AND WOULD SAVE THE PUBLIC A LOT OF TROUBLE.

Stafford when their motor was wrecked at Aston. Both members complained of being hurt and shaken." But surely, if they have accidents, this is the least they must expect.

There are, we all know, cats and Thomas cats. An old lady now writes to ask us whether there are also two sexes among motor-cars, forwarding us a newspaper cutting which mentions that a "Thomas car" is taking part in the New York to Paris race.

The death is announced of a Zoo hippopotamus. No one who saw her will be surprised to hear that she died a spinster.

A contemporary has just inaugurated a special column for ladies,

MY FUR COAT.

(By "Mr. Punch's" Charivari Artist.)

A RICH uncle left it me; and I remember we thought it a very mean legacy, and we only went into half-mourning. As for the coat, "I shan't take it," I said. "I hate all wearers of fur coats. I shall renounce the legacy." "You will do nothing of the sort," said my wife. "I don't want to look like a beastly millionaire," I said. "And why not?" asked my wife. "Well, we'll see," I said weakly.

The thing was a long while coming. I imagine that for a time the two executors wore it on alternate days as one of the perquisites of office. Anyhow, they had not taken great care of it. "I think," said I, on viewing the coat, "that my uncle would have done better to present this to the Natural History Museum for research purposes," and I angrily removed a couple of moths with the words, "My coat, please." "Nonsense," said my wife; "it's been neglected a bit, that's all. We'll have it done up, and made to fit you"—my uncle was a very stout man—"and in the cold weather you'll be very pleased to have it. After all, why shouldn't you look like a gentleman?" "Very well," I said; "only I haven't the remotest idea what to feed it on, or anything of that sort, and you had better try and find out what is the best handbook on the subject."

It came back from the exterminators as good as new, and I entered into a compromise with my wife, under the terms of which she was not to insist on my wearing the coat in Town, but I agreed to take it with me on a lecturing tour on which I was just embarking. As a matter of fact I found it extremely useful on my tour. It certainly added to my *prestige*. It undoubtedly made me look almost worth my money. At the same time it was not all lavender. The coat, I should mention, was an extremely valuable one, and, at moments when I was striving to amuse my audience, a pained expression would suddenly cross my face. I would be wondering whether some vile fellow was not, perhaps, making off with my coat from the little room at the back. It was the old tale, so to say, of the clown making merry behind the footlights while his favourite child was dying at home.

However, no one guessed the value of the coat, and it survived my tour.

That was last year.

This year opened with weather of



Guest from Town (who is being shown over poultry farm) "ER—AWFULLY INTERESTIN' AN' ALL THAT. BUT WHAT DO THE LOOK BEGGARS DO WITH THEMSELVES ALL DAY?"

exceptional severity. "You'll be a fool if you don't wear your fur coat," said my wife. The implied compliment that I was not always a fool pleased me, coming from such a quarter—and, besides, it was very cold, and I had got over my initial repugnance to the thing. So I took to wearing my fur coat in Town, and I have come to like it. My friends declare that it is exercising a subtle influence on my character, and that I who used to be so modest am becoming arrogant.

Naturally at first I had to run the gauntlet of a number of ill-natured remarks and feeble jests from my acquaintance. The sleeves of the overcoat had a way of working themselves up so that the sleeves of the

under-coat protruded. I pointed this out to a man who I thought could, perhaps, suggest a remedy. He put his ear to my shoulder and listened. Then he turned a grave face to me, and said, "Ah, I thought so!" "What is it?" I cried anxiously. "Why, it's the moths," he said; "I distinctly heard the little beggars crying, 'Now then, all together, pull!'"

Another so-called friend sent his little boy round to me one day with his butterfly net and an insulting request. Yet another acquaintance asked me, "What is the name of your coat—Fido or Dinah?" and another, "I suppose it can catch mice as well as moths?"

(To be continued.)

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks.)

"TOBY, M.P.," was never a dog that cared much for dry bones; and his *Memories of Eight Parliaments* (HEINEMANN) does not pretend to be a work of academic erudition. For chronology, as such, he wouldn't give you a collar-button, and his cheerful contempt for pedantry is reflected in a fluency of style which betrays no sign of superfluous lucubration. Yet his head is a veritable treasure-house of Parliamentary knowledge; for up aloft there, from his vantage-place of looker-on who sees most of the game, he has allowed little that was worth noting to elude his watchful eye. But Mr. Lucy ("for it is he") has also enjoyed, as few other journalists, a personal acquaintance with the best politicians of every shade; and it must be accounted to him for virtue that he has so little to say about himself. He even underestimates, in his title, the length of his experience, which has extended over *nine* Parliaments. And his discretion is such that it would be a hard matter to decide from the internal evidence of his book what are his own political leanings. He appears to be a Liberal-Conservative, with a slight bias in favour of Unionist-Radicalism. His judgment is as kindly as it is catholic; and Lord ROSEBERY, whom he describes as a "tireless worker," should not be the only one to give him credit for erring, if at all, in excess of approbation. So infectious, it would seem, is the atmosphere of geniality that emanates from Mr. Punch.

The Human Boy Again (CHAPMAN AND HALL) has set me wondering where on earth Mr. EDEN PHILLPOTTS and sundry other less eminent writers of school stories get their raw material. I suspect that they must dig it up from the back numbers of the sixpenny magazines. There, of course, I have often read of the sort of school (where the ages of the boys range from eight to eighteen) which Mr. PHILLPOTTS calls "Merivale." The school-sergeant, "who was old and had seen battle, and had a grey moustache and medals and a fiery expression," is a very old friend. So is the Doctor. I know by heart the sesquipedalian phrases which he will give away with the prizes, and I should feel defrauded if his daughter Milly were not secretly engaged to the rottenest kid in the school. Also, "me being older than her," I know that the boys cannot help themselves. It isn't that they will be boys. They've got to be boys, and go in for keeping guinea-pigs, and fighting, and scoring off the masters, though all these pastimes have long ago ceased to be part of the ordinary public-school curriculum. And their conversation must be an ungram-

matical imitation of the Doctor's stilted language, plentifully seasoned with such words as beastly, frightfully, kids, spiffing, swizz, chouse, blub, curious, decent, and so forth, and in everything that they do or say or write they must unconsciously serve as the butt of their creator, the author's, humour. At least that is the fate of the twelve Merivale boys who tell the stories in what they would call the book of PHILLPOTTS. I am not denying that they are human or that their stories are fairly amusing, but I do wish that the next time Mr. PHILLPOTTS wants to talk about boys he would try to be a little more up-to-date instead of giving us the Magazine Boy again.

While I admire extremely the ingenuity which Mr. A. C. FOX-DAVIES has brought to the making of the series of episodes contained in his book *The Finances of Sir John Kynnersley* (LANE) I cannot quite bring myself to admire Sir John. The story of his financial achievements is that of a number of very daring and beautifully planned frauds by which the baronet, left penniless by a swindling company-promoter, acquires wealth and honour. In several cases he gets back on people who have done him bad turns, and here he has my sympathies, for though the means are questionable the end is made to seem to justify them. Besides, he is on the whole a quite pleasant, well-mannered fellow. But when he annexes the proceeds of a bazaar in aid of the Cancer Research Fund; when he buys *The Times* in the name of an inoffensive millionaire whom chance has put in his way, and, backed by the "Thunderer," juggles mercilessly with the money markets;

and when he deliberately pirates copyright books and resells them to publishers, then I say that he does not deserve the G.C.B. which he gets for a fortuitous service rendered to the War Office. Still, I read every word of the book, and enjoyed nearly all of them. Among the exceptions were those which went to the composition of split infinitives.

"The Throne" on "Diana of Dobson's."

"Somewhere or other she has read or heard a quotation, 'one crowded hour of glorious life.' She does not know it is Tennyson's."

But she might have thought it was, and that would be almost as bad.

"Upon the removal of the cloths, everything went with an *esprits de corps*, which, notwithstanding an hour's extension, the hour of departure arrived all too soon, toast, song, and recitation so agreeably blinding as to form a most pleasant evening."—*The Tonbridge Free Press*.

We are afraid that the *esprits* were too strong for the *corps* in one instance.



Gentleman of Leisure. "You don't say you've started work, Joe? This is the first stroke I've seen ye do since I've known ye."
Joe. "It's the first job I've ever found as I could put me 'eart in."